

THE
HONOUR
OF THE
CLERGY
Vindicated from Contempt of the
LAITY,
IN A
SERMON

Preached at the Arch-Deacon of *Lincoln* his Visitation,
holden at *Grantham*, Oct. 15. 1672.

By *THOMAS LODINGTON* Master of Arts, sometimes
Fellow of *Magdalen Colledge* in *Cambridge*, and now
Rector of *Welby* in the County of *Lincoln*.

*Presbyteri, qui bene præsunt vitâ & doctrinâ, digni habeantur à subditis duplici
honore, scilicet ut spiritualiter eis obediant, & exteriora bona ministrent.
St. August.*

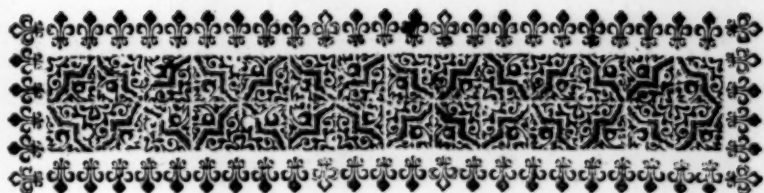
*And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many
to righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever. Dan. 12. 3.*

L O N D O N,

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2



To the Right Reverend Father in God
Edward by Divine permission Lord Bishop
of *Carlisle*, *Thomas Lodington* Rector of
Welby in the County of *Lincoln*, wisheth
all happines temporal and eternal.

My Lord,

I Have long deliberated, whether to offer
this Sermon to the publick view; though
some of the most Learned and Judicious of
the Clergie, who heard it, were pleased to ex-
press their good approbation of it.

This long demur I have recompensed by a rea-
dy resolution in the Dedication of it, namely,
to put it under your Lordship's Patronage.
Your Lordship was pleased, some years since, to
fix me in a place very advantageous for my stu-
dies,

THE EPISTLE

dies, by preferring me in your Colledge. Therefore if I were able to bring forth any thing in any measure worthy of the Press, I must acknowledge my self obliged both in justice and gratitude, to make a tender of it to your Lordship. And indeed this was one thing that weighed heavy in the Balance, and cast the Scales this way; that I might by this means gain occasion to make a publick thankfull acknowledgment of your Lordship's respects and kindness to me.

But there is a further account, my Lord, to be given of this my ready choice. The design of the ensuing Discourse is, That the Sacred Function of the Ministry be preserved in its due honour, by the pious and prudent demeanour of all persons imployed in it; that so the corrupt nature of men, prone to vilifie, despise, and oppose whatsoever gives check to their lusts, and calls them to better carriage towards God and man, may be put to greatest straits how to give a tolerable account of their contempt of the Ministry, while those persons that serve in it, are so diligent in their Office, and circumspect in their Conversation.

DEDICATORY.

tion. My Lord, I have had the happiness to know your Lordship above thirty years, and to be acquainted with you most of that time, and have observed, it hath been your Lordship's constant pious care to suppress Vice, and encourage Vertue, by your severity against the one, and rewards to the other; in the Discipline of that Colledge prudently managed by your Lordship, when Master of it, and also before, when you bore a lower Office in it. Neither did the looseness of those times, nor your Lordship's disuse from Government, those many years of your Exile from your Colledge, slacken your hands to your former pious practice: but upon your return to your place, your Lordship returned also to your former course. And so your Lordship hath served happily in your former station to this great end, That Youth might be trained up to Vertue, and accomplished with Learning, that those, who should be called to the Ministerial Function, might be fitted, to build with both hands in the Temple of the Lord, namely, sound Doctrine, and vertuous life.

And

And since your Lordships promotion to that place of Honour your Lordship now holds in the Church; to exemplifie the Psalmists character of pious men, in your own Person, That they shall bring forth more fruit in their age; Your Lordship hath used the same methods of Government in your Diocels, as formerly in your Colledge, for the preservation of the innocency, and consequently the honour of your Clergy.

And thus, my Lord, it having been your Lordships former care to train men up in Piety and Learning, to render them worthy of admittance into the Sacred Office of the Ministry; and your Lordships present care, that those under your Government might walk worthy of their Holy Calling: I have reason to conclude your Lordship most worthy, and to hope your Lordship will be willing to undertake the Patronage of this Sermon, which makes some overtures further to do, what your Lordship hath been doing most of your life, and is still doing.

That

DEDICATORY.

That Almighty God would bless your Lordship with the abundance of all blessings Spiritual and Temporal, that your Lordship may live long to serve God in his Church, to the glory of God, the good of the Church, and your own happy account at the last day, is the earnest desire, and shall be the constant prayer of,

My Lord,

Welby,
Oct. 20.
1673.

Your Lordships most humble
and most obliged Servant,

Tho. Lodington.

(1)

A

SERMON,

Vindicating the Honour of the

CLERGY

From Contempt of the

LAITY.

2COR. 5. 20.

Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christs stead; be ye reconciled to God.

GOD, infinite, as in all other perfecti-
ons, so in wisdom, would not have
suffered evil to enter into the world,
but that he knew how to bring good out of it.
The *Angels*, who sinned first of all creatures, and

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there-

therefore without a tempter ; who sinned in the blessed presence of the All-sufficient God, and in the possession of a glorious Estate ; *those* hath God cast down to Hell, and delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, That the power and justice of God might be glorified in their deserved punishment.

Man, drawn into sin, if not by the example, yet by the instigation, of one of those Apostate Angels, and by his first personal disobedience involving his whole succeeding posterity in like calamity with himself: *Him* hath God graciously undertaken to deliver from death, the threatned aswell as deserved punishment of his disobedience. And to counterwork Satan in his deceiving and destroying man, working upon the woman the weaker vessel, who being seduced and overcome, became a helpful instrument to betray the man into the power of the Devil: God willed, that the *seed of the woman should bruise the Serpents head* ; that the eternal Son of God should in the fulness of time, put on the nature of man, be born of a woman, charge himself with

Undicated from Contempt of the Laity. 3

with our transgressions, and by his suffering of death in our stead, expiate our sins, and deliver our persons from everlasting wrath, and exalt us to great glory.

Our gracious Redeemer intending to purchase this our redemption by his own blood, makes overtures before-hand of peace, to all such as will come unto him: preacheth the glad tidings of salvation in his own person, and calls in some from among men, at present to assist him in that blessed service, and afterward to succeed him in it, after his departure out of the world.

This is that to which the Text hath reference, *vers. 18, 19. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christs stead, be ye reconciled to God.

The Text is a conclusion or inference drawn from former discourse. That which the Apostle says therein, is the result of what he had even now said.

The *Subject* of the Apostles discourse is, *Himself* and *Others* associated with him in the same office: *We*.

The *Matter* discoursed on is, That *honourable calling* to which they are called, That *important service* committed to their trust: *Ambassadors for Christ*.

The *Persons* to whom these Ambassadors are sent to negotiate withall: *You*.

The *Business* about which these Ambassadors are sent, and the *End* to which their Embassy is to serve: is, The making Peace betwixt God and Man.

Be ye reconciled unto God.

These are the particulars contained in the Text; I shall speak of the two former of them, and in them of the two latter also, and so give the Text a full explication.

Begin we first with the *Persons* employed in this honourable service: *We*.

I. *We*,

I. We, Men: not God, nor Angels.

To transact with sinners by *Ambassadors*; rather than by the immediate voice of *God himself*, is both more suitable to the infinite Majesty of God, and also to the great distance and weakness of sinners.

So dreadful was the voice of the Lord unto the people, when he gave the Law to them, and talked with them face to face in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire, that they desired *Moses* to go near, and hear all that the Lord their God should speak, promising that they would *hear* it and *do* it, *Dent. 5. 4, 5, 27.*

And God approves of what they had said, *Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God that I die not. And the Lord said, They have well spoken, I will raise them up a Prophet, Deut. 18. 16, 17.*

It pleased our *Saviour* to make use of some of those his glorious Attendants in *Heaven*, the holy Angels, to wait upon him on *Earth*, at his *Birth*, to give credit and honour to the same; and also at his *Resurrection* and *Ascension*, to witness the same to those who were appointed

appointed witnesses thereof to the world. But he will have *us men* to be witnesses to him, and to preach Reconciliation to God through him, to you, 1. That your access may be free and easie and without fear, to *us*, who are of your selves. And 2. That we may have real affection and compassion for you, to bring you, as we would our selves, to God, --- *As a Father doth his children*, 1 Thes. 2. 11.

II. We, *Sinners*, Men, not only of the same nature, and like passion with you, but of like guilt, and under the same condemnation: obnoxious, as you, to the everlasting wrath of God. *Sinners*, not persons exempted out of the common rebellion, are employed in the peace-making. *Who hath reconciled us*, v. 18. We who are found among the offenders, are made use of to reduce all to the obedience of God.

1. That we who *preach* salvation to you, may not be thought *procurers* of it for you. *Acse redimeret vos Deus per nos*, so the *Arabick* version is rendred. The service we have in the reconciliation might represent us the
Peace-makers:

Peace-makers: but our sinful nature shews us of confederacy in the Rebellion.

2. That we may preach more *affectionately* and *effectually* to you, knowing our own need of the same grace we offer to you in the name of Christ.

3. That we may be *Exemplary* unto you, receiving the same grace, and yielding the same obedience to Christ, which we exhort you to.

4. That the glory of your salvation may be wholly and entirely God's. *We have this treasure in earthen (yea in tainted) Vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us, 2 Cor. 4. 7.*

III. We, *Apostles*; chosen persons, called and enabled to such service. *And hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, v. 18. And hath committed to us the word of reconciliation, v. 19.* To us, Eye and Ear-witnesses of the Life, Doctrine, and Miracles of Christ; of his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. *We*, who by our mean and vulgar education, were unfit for such employment, yet by
 conversing

conversing with Christ and afterwards by the fulness of his spirit poured forth upon us, have been fitted for it.

1. That the Gospel might be published throughout the world.

2. That the truth thereof might be sealed with the blood of the first Preachers.

IV. *We*: not only I *Paul*, and my associates, the rest of the Apostles: but we, and our successors, the Ministers of the Gospel, to the end of the world. Our Saviour's gracious promise, *Matth. ult. Job. 17. 20.* and the nature and intent of the service, do both urge this latitude of the word.

That the ministry of reconciliation may be perpetuated; Christ's spiritual kingdom upheld and propagated; and sinners brought to God through all ages of the world.

Thus much for the Persons employed; we now proceed in the second place to the *honourable employment* of those Persons, and that is, to be Ambassadors; Ambassadors from God, Ambassadors for Christ, Christ's Deputies, in his stead after his departure from the world,

world, negotiating that great business, for the effecting of which he was sent from God his Father into the world. We are *Ambassadors for Christ*, as though God did beseech you as formerly by Christ, so now by us, we pray you in *Christ's stead*.

Herein observe five particulars.

I. *The nature of the employment.* Ambassadors are persons sent by one Prince or State to another about affairs of State of publick concernment.

Πρεσβευομεν is from a word that signifies Elder years, to note the *gravity* and *abilities* of such persons as are fit to be employed in such service; not the *infirmities* of age, but the improvement thereof to knowledge, wisdom, and experience, how to manage business to best advantage. *Authority* to undertake, and *Ability* to discharge, are both required.

The Apostles had *both* immediately from Christ: they were *called*, and they were *qualified by him*.

We, the Ministers of the Gospel, have also
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both from Christ, but neither of them immediately: we have our ministerial *Abilities* from him, blessing our Education and studies in the Schools of Learning and Piety: Our *Authority* from him also; the Church in his name investing us with it, by vertue of power delegated to her from him. *Deus nos hodiè vocat ad ministerium, vocatione mediata, estq; mediata; quia per hominem fit, & tamen Divina est; says Luther.* So that we may say with St. *Augustine*, *O res gestas in terrâ, sed cœlitus; per homines, sed divinitus!*

2. *By whom sent.* By God, the gracious God, who dishonoured and injured by man, is yet first in seeking reconciliation; as if himself had broken the Peace or were not able to revenge the injury. God seeks to man, as if himself were to be the greatest, if not only, gainer by the Peace concluded. God, who had before sent his chief Ambassador of Peace, his Eternal Son, to purchase Peace for sinners, doth now send others under him, to pray acceptance of it at the hands of sinners.

3. *In whose place substituted.* For Christ,
In

Unindicated from Contempt of the Laity. 11

In gratiam Christi, To carry on a work most acceptable unto Christ, and advantageous to his mediatory kingdom. *Vice Christi*, in *Christ's stead*. That which Christ had begun to execute in his own person, he, being gone to Heaven to prepare mansions of glory for his people, proceeds in by our Embassy.

4. *To whom sent*. *You*: Not you only of the Church of *Corinth*. Such a restraint becomes not the glorious work of Man's Redemption.

You Sinners; you, all you the lost Sons of fallen *Adam*, whose particulars make up the whole of Mankind, or the World; For you is this Salvation purchased, To you are we sent Ambassadors. You doth God beseech by us; You in Christ's stead do we pray. This large extent of our Embassy bears some proportion to the merits of Christ and mercies of God, which are infinite. Col. 1. 28. *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*. There's both the *Extent*, and the *Intent* of our Embassy.

5. *Upon what negotiation.* The most real and weighty business that ever message was sent about, namely, *the reconciling sinners unto God. Ut convertamini ad Deum*, so the *Æthiopick* is rendered. That Rebels would cease from their rebellion against God, and become good Subjects to him. That Satan's Kingdom might be overthrown, and God's Kingdom be erected, and promoted, in the hearts and lives of men. To work a thorough change in the nature of men, that they may again resemble the pattern of their Creation, and be like unto God.

Beatus & beatificus Deus factus particeps humanitatis nostræ, compendium nobis præbuit participandæ Divinitatis suæ. Lombard. The Son of God assumed so much of man, as thereby he might draw us the nearer to himself as God.

The Text thus explicated supposes a distinction of men into *Clergie* and *Laity*. Here are *Ambassadors* commissioned, furnished, sent; and *People*, who need counsel and assistance, to whom they are sent.

We

We and *You*, divide the world; nor is the distinction for *division* sake, but for greater *union*; that by *our* preaching, and *your* hearing, and *our* and *your* obedience to the Gospel, we may all be united together to Christ by Faith, and to one another by Love. It's no new distinction, nor was it devised by man, but appointed by God; Priests and Levites under the Law; Apostles and Ministers under the Gospel; both ordained by God, to minister in Sacred things, and to guide the people to God. Nay long before the Law was given, the *Father of the family* was both *King* and *Priest* to his family, to govern, teach, and offer sacrifice. *Duplex portio*, *Dominium*, *Sacerdotium*, were the Three things that belonged to the eldest Son by right of Primogeniture.

Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation are holy every one of them, wherefore then lift you up your selves above the Congregation of the Lord, Numb. 16. 3? This was a seditious and Schismatical speech of old, intended to take away the Authority and Function of the Priest, upon pretence there was no further
need

need of him, by reason of the peoples sanctity. The Ministerial Function hath of late by some been thought useles, upon the same pretended sanctity of the people, and supplanted by all the crafty devices which the wit of subtil adversaries could imagine: But Almighty God, the author of the distinction, hath hitherto been the defender of that branch of it, so spurned at, even against all opposers; and will be to the end of the world. Seeing God, who can command all effects by a word of his mouth, without the assistance of their proper causes, is pleased to make use of Labourers in his Harvest, he will not want them till the Harvest be ended. We have from him who is the chief Bishop of his Church, a faithful promise of *protection and blessing* in our sacred function, *even unto the end of the world*, Mat. 28.

He who hath given *some Apostles and some Prophets, and some Evangelists and some Pastors and Teachers; For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, will continue them till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge*

knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man: Till the mystical body of Christ be gathered out of all ages of the world and compleated.

Athanasius building his hope upon these firm grounds, says of *Julian* the Apostate his persecution of the Church, and especially of that cunning artifice of his in suppressing Schools of Learning, where Christians might be trained up to ministerial abilities, *Sunt Nubecula cito transitura.*

II. Each distinction of men receives *honour* from God and is charged with *duty*. What esteem you are in with God, and how honoured by him this proves, That God hath *reconciled you to himself by Jesus Christ*. The greatness of the Person undertaking, and of the price paid, speaks the value of the thing ransomed. The Son of God hath redeemed you, *not with corruptible things, but with his own most precious blood*. God hath reconciled you to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation. Such effectual care taken for your peace with God (the utmost effect whereof is everlasting life) testifies.

testifies for you, that you are highly valued by God.

The *Duty* given you in charge, is no other than what your own interest rightly understood, will lead you to perform, namely, to accept of that Peace purchased by *Christ*, and tendered by *us*: to turn from the evil of your ways, and be reconciled to God.

We are of *you*, and partake with you of this *honour*, and stand obliged with you, under the same *duty*. But to be Ambassadors in this high affair, is our peculiar *Dignity*, and to be faithful and diligent in that our Embassy, is our peculiar *Duty*.

There are *five* things which render Ambassadors honourable, and these all concur to make our office truly such.

1. To be employed by a great puissant King of large and flourishing dominion; 2. To have secrets of State made known to them, and committed to their trust; 3. To be sent unto a great People; 4. About important affairs which may be to the honour of that King, and benefit of that People: and 5. That the Ambassadors

Ambassadors their presence and transactions be reputed, as if the King himself were present, and did act in his own Royal Person.

1. *We are employed by the most Puissant King of Heaven and Earth*, to whom all the Kings of the earth are tributary, and hold their Kingdoms of him; whose right of Sovereignty is derived from none; whose Kingdom no time did begin, nor shall any determine: none can controll his authority, nor resist his power.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as Grasshoppers, that stretcheth out the heavens as a Curtain, and spreadeth them out as a Tent to dwell in, Esai. 40. 12, 22. This is that King of Glory whom we serve. *We are the Messengers of the Lord of Hosts, Mal. 2. 7.*

2. *Secrets of State are discovered to us, and intrusted with us.* The Gospel, that word of reconciliation committed to us, is a *mystery*:

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Christ,

Christ, the wisdom of the Father, discovers therein the mind of God to man concerning his salvation. *And without controversie great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh*— 1 Tim. 3. 16. *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, and now is made manifest to his Saints,* Col. 1. 26. A mystery, both in the substance, and also in the application of it. That life should be purchased for sinners by the death of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and that the Gentiles also should be partakers of it. This *kept secret* not only from the Gentiles, but from the Jews also in greatest part; the death of Christ being darkly resembled to them by the blood of the Sacrifices. *Kept secret* not only from men but Angels: Eph. 3. 10. ---*which things the Angels desire to look into,* 1 Pet. 1. 12.

3. *Sent to a great People*; I cannot say, *The greatest Nation in the world*, for here's none left out to stand in the comparison. All Nations are comprehended, as concerned in our Embassy.

It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant,

vant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation to the ends of the earth, Esai. 49. 6.

The vast extent of this salvation renders it an undertaking worthy of our Redeemer the eternal Son of God. And proportionable to that Commission given to the *chief Ambassador*, who purchased peace for sinners, is that Commission granted to his *substitutes*, who tender it; *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, Mark 16. 15.*

4. *Upon the most important business* that ever was transacted betwixt God and man. That the breach made betwixt God and man, by man's disobedience, may be made up by man's acceptance of Christ's achievements in his behalf. *Articles of agreement* are already consented to on God's part; the Peace is concluded with man: what remains to be done, is on man's part, that he will be content to have peace with God, and in order thereto, lay aside that enmity which is in his heart to the holy Laws of God. And upon man's consenting

to, or rejecting these terms of peace with God, depends his everlasting estate. *Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of Heaven, 1 Cor. 6. 9. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him? John 3. 36.*

The conversion of sinners is the business of our Embassy, *To whom I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me, Acts 26. 18.* This is the tenure of St. Paul's Commission received from Christ.

5. And all reputed as done by God himself, by Christ in his own person. --- *As if God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead.*

Our Apostle will by no means accept of divine honour done unto him at *Lystra, Acts 14.* nor suffer himself to be reputed a God. But in the course of his Ministry, he is content to be received *as an Angel of God, even as Jesus Christ, Gal. 4. 14.* and imputes their so doing
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to the *Galatians* to their high commendation. His *Commission* is from God, his Instructions are from God, he will therefore that his word be received, *not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God,* 1 Thes. 2. 13.

And that nothing may be wanting, that might give glory to the Apostolical mission, thus our blessed Lord expresses it, *As my Father sent me, so send I you,* John 20. 21. *He that beareth you, beareth me: and he that despiseth you despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me,* Luke 10. 16.

This for the *Honour* of our Office: the *Duty* of it follows. It is required of *Ambassadors*, That they be *faithful*, That they be *diligent*, That they be *exemplary*. To be *successful* is their *happinefs*, not their *duty*. Success depends upon other causes, and is not always a fruit of their faithfulness. What therefore is out of their *power*, comes not under their *duty*. *Propter ea quæ non sunt ἐφ' ἡμῶν, nemo debet laudari, aut vituperari,* Arist. Ethic.

Their *faithfulness* lies in this, That they act by vertue of their *Commission*: According to
their

The honour of the Clergy

their instructions; and *To the end for which they are sent*.

Their Industry and Diligence; In preparing themselves for the service; and in *employing* themselves at all fit *times*, by all due *means*, and to their *ability* to effect what is given them in command.

Their exemplariness; That they practise that obedience they require.

Our spiritual Embassy is duly executed, when we are *faithful* to our trust, *diligent* in our business, and *exemplary* in our carriage.

I. We are *Faithful*:

1. When we minister about Sacred things, by vertue of *authority* given unto us so to do; as having received *commission* to preach, administer the Sacraments, and do what else our office requires: as *lawfully ordained* by that power delegated by Christ to his Church, and by such persons, and in such manner, as the Church appoints. Mens abilities, though sufficient for the Ministerial function, are not sufficient warrant for them to exercise themselves in it, unless upon evidence of the same, they
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be legally ordained by lawful authority.

2. *When we act according to the instructions given us by our Lord.* Our *Letters credential*, by vertue whereof we are taken and reputed for Ambassadors of Christ, are our *Letters of Orders*. Our *Letters directive*, how to execute that office, is the *holy Scriptures*. As we are to act by vertue of the one, so according to the instruction of the other. *Behold an hand was sent unto me, and lo a roll of a book was therein*, Ezek. 2. 9. The *hand* to give him authority, and the *book* to give him instruction.

The *Scriptures*, able to make wise unto salvation, and to furnish the man of God to every good work, are the compleat furniture for an Ambassador of Christ. The great usefulness of other learning, is not to supply any supposed defect in *Scripture*, but in our *selves*; that we may be brought to a right understanding of *Scripture*, to interpret it soundly, and apply it effectually.

False Prophets are reprov'd for running before they were sent, and prophesying before they had received message from God; as if the one offence

offence did draw the other after it, and men, who would go without *commission*, would speak also without *instruction*. True Prophets will take *both* along with them, *Authority* to admit them to their office, and *Instruction* from the word of God to *accomplish* them for it, and *direct* them in it.

3. *When we use our Authority and Instructions to the end for which they are given*, namely, To turn sinners from the evil of their ways, that they may be reconciled to God. Not to amuse the minds of the people with new-coin'd words, and rare notions, pretended to be sublime and heavenly, but are indeed empty shadows of things.

Not to tickle *itching ears*, or please airy phantasies with flourishes of wit; but to instruct men *in the good old way* unto Faith and Repentance. Τα nowà καwōς, is a good rule in *Rhetorick*, but it is not so in *Divinity*. Let the divine Oratour practise that of *Irenæus*, Τα αὐτὰ πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ. *De iisdem, dicenda sunt eadem*. To write the same things ---to you is safe, Phil. 3. 1.

II. Our

II. Our *Diligence* and *Industry*.

I. In our *due preparation* made to fit our selves for our employment in this sacred office. It was one of the miracles our Saviour wrought to confirm the truth of his Doctrine, That poor ignorant men, of rude education, were made eloquent preachers of the same. Miracles are now ceased; Our Saviour gives us abilities for our sacred function, by his blessing upon our studies. It's our duty to fit our selves by long and diligent study, divine meditation and fervent prayer; and not presently make a bold pretence to the Spirit, and so rashly and rashly fall upon the work of preaching. 1 Tim. 4. 13, 14, 15. *Meditate on these things.* It's not sufficient that a Candidate for the Ministry prepare himself for *admission* into the office, but he must afterwards also daily prepare himself for his further and better *discharge* of it. By the great neglect of this, *Ecclesiastical Authority* hath unjustly fallen under hard censures, and suffered reproach for conferring holy Orders upon weak and unworthy men: whereas had the after diligence of those persons, the cause hereof,

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been

been as great as their former, they might have proved eminent for Learning and Piety, and been as happy instances to prove the great care and circumspection of Authority to admit none but worthy men, as they seem unhappy instances to the contrary.

2. Our parts, and learning, and graces, must all be employed in this service, and with a serious design at the end of it, That we may gain Profelytes to Religion, and win Sinners to God. This is *the work of the Lord*, it must not be done *negligently*; the great importance of it will not admit of sloth and carelessness. By the very Heathens, *In sacris dici solebat, Hoc age.*

Good success is not required, either *as a part of our duty*, or *proof of our industry*. That is proportioned mostly to the subject we have to work upon, and always depends on the will of God. Ezek. 3. 7. *They are impudent and hard-hearted, they will not hearken to thee, for they will not hearken to me.* Where God hath much people in a City, there will be audience and obedience given to his Messengers, *Acts 18.9.*
Then

Then you shall have *three thousand* converted at one Sermon.

Want of success, or apparent fears of it, must not discourage us, nor cause us to slack our diligence. For if we consider it, a faithful Ambassador of Christ never wants success in his ministry. *Success* hath a three-fold reference in this case, *To God*, that he be glorified, *To our selves*, that our reward be secured to us, *To you*, that you be reconciled to God. Our faithfulness in our ministry will secure us from ill success in the two *former* references, though your inflexible nature may prevent us in the *third*. 2 Cor. 2. 14, 15, 16. *Now thanks be unto God, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ,----* Esai. 49. 5. *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.*

We earnestly beg the favour of you to give us good success in the other respect, That we may give up our account *with joy* and *not with grief*.

III. This is also required of us in the discharge of our spiritual Embassy, *That we be*

exemplary; Patterns of those vertues and graces we recommend to others. Let the Preachers first Profelyte be in his own breast: let him make the first address to himself, whatsoever duty he presseth upon his people. *Pastores doceant doctrinâ, ut Auditores audiant; doceant vitâ, ut Auditores videant.* They deserve ill of mankind, says *Seneca* of those Philosophers, *Qui aliter vivunt, quàm vivendum esse præcipiunt.*

Our blessed Saviour, who was a *Teacher sent from God*, and spake as never man spake, to eloquence of speech added that more perswasive *Rhetorick* of a vertuous life; *Quicquid præscripsit aliis, præstitit ipse.* Personal innocence gives boldness to him, who hath other mens sins to reprove. With what high confidence and irresistible power did our Saviour reprove the sins of the Jews, when he ushered in his rebukes with that confident Justification of himself, even themselves being Judges, *Which of you convinceth me of sin?* *Joh. 8. 46.*

For us to stand like those *Statue Mercuriales*, to direct others the way to Heaven, and
not

not stir a foot our selves , gives suspicion of meer delusion in the whole matter, and that we our selves do not believe , what we preach to others.

This will prove us in earnest in our Exhortations , when *we do* the same things we *press* upon *others*. This will give experiment of the feasibility of those duties we give in charge, that they are not so difficult , nor humane nature so far depressed and weakened , but that they may be done.

This will preserve us, that while we preach to others our selves shall not be cast-aways ; it will not be said of us, what *Cicero* said of *Demosthenes* , *Apud alios loqui didicerat, non multum ipse secum.*

However we declaim against vice, and speak in the praise of vertue , that our Hearers may love and practise the one , and hate and avoid the other, let our selves be effectually prevailed upon, and made true Converts.

IV. There is a fourth thing to be added, without which neither the Ambassador of State , nor the spiritual Ambassador , will discharge

charge his duty, and that is *Courage*. Without this vertue, he shall not dare to be faithful, diligent, and exemplary.

He stands in need of courage, who will be vertuous in such a profligate Age as this; especially, and much more, he who will reprove vice in others, and take upon him to counsel them to vertuous life. Courage draws us forth into action, and daily puts new vigour into us, for the faithful discharge of our duty.

And thou Son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though bryars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house, Ezek. 2. 6.

Behold I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an Adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead, Ezek. 3. 8, 9. This the matter given in charge, and this the accomplishment of a Prophet sent to such a perverse generation.

Ἐμμελὴς τῷ πρακτέῳ, ἀμελὴς δὲ τῷ περὶ αὐτὸ λογοποισμένῳ, was Severus the Emperor
his

his Rule, Do your duty, and regard not discouragements from men, whether by look, word, or deed.

Having thus spoken to the *Dignity* and *Duty* of our Office; let us now reflect upon our selves, and see what acceptance we have in the world.

Surely it cannot be imagined, but that those persons should be received with all kindness, and treated with all due respects, nay highly caressed, on whom God hath put such honour, and whose Office is so much to the best advantage of men.

But if we examine how it is commonly carried towards us, we shall find our *Office vilified*, our *Persons contemned*, in such manner, as if God had intended our Embassy for *him*, to be dishonour unto *us*, and our service, to be to the disturbance and damage of our people.

Custom hath indeed well determined the precedency among the *Professors* of those *three noble Sciences*, which secure the whole interest of man, his soul, body, and estate. The first place is assigned to the *Divine*, who undertakes

takes the security of the *Soul* which is immortal ; the next to the *Civilian*, who defends the *Estate* which is descendant upon Posterity ; the last to the *Physician*, who preserves the *Body* which is frail and mortal. The present practice would invert the order, the *Divine* may take his *place* if he please ; but the *Physician* and the *Lawyer*, who serve to those ends men better like, are preferred in their *affections* and *esteem*.

And as if it were our *Office* that did put the dishonour upon our *Persons*, they that like to speak disdainfully of us, chuse no other names than those by which our Profession is commonly known, to express their low opinion of us.

Priest and *Parson*, are in their account, the fittest nick-names to call us by, when they would signifie their displeasure at us.

And so much hath Custom altered, through tract of time, that the word *Person*, which at first was appropriated to dignified men, such who were more honourable among their Brethren of the Clergy, is now with a little broader pronounciation, used

Aquin. sum.

1. pars 29.

94. art. 2.

used to lay their honour in the dust, and to represent them the vilest of men.

But how comes it thus to pass, that men should run counter both to God and themselves, to dishonour those whom God will honour, and undervalue and despise those, who are so serviceable to them in their highest concern; *To whom they owe even their own selves*, Philem. 19.

May it not be thought, that God hath withdrawn his *Commission* and *Letters Credential*, and recalled his *Ambassadors*? That there is no such distinction now remaining, as *Minister* and *People*? Hath not God provided a new way, both more cheap and sure, to bring his people to Heaven, without the chargeable help of Ministers, namely, the inward conduct of his holy Spirit?

I suppose there are none of this persuasion, saving those *Fanaticks*, *Levellers in the Church*, who (like those *State-Levellers* of late, whose pride and ambition lifting them up as *high*, as their birth and fortune had set them *low*, to bring themselves unto equal terms with the rich

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and honourable, devised that trick of levelling all to the same measure of estate) itching to put their hands to the honourable service of the Ministry, and conscious to themselves of the want of Ministerial education and abilities to commend them to a legal admission into the Office, throw down all distinction of men, and mingle all again into one mass, that so themselves, *unfit as Ordained Ministers*, yet *most fit* in their own esteem, as *gifted Brethren*, might preach the Gospel.

But have not the Clergy themselves forfeited that honour God had invested them with? have not they lost that veneration and esteem which they sometimes had in the eyes of the people? have they not stript themselves of the reputation of their Office, by being unfit for it? remiss and negligent in it? regardless of the ends to which they were ordained to serve? And if they themselves do *unjustly* deny the people the discharge of the *duty* of their Function, may not the people *justly* withdraw from them the *honour* of it, seeing *that* is annexed to it, for *this end* chiefly, to further their success in it?

It's

It's easie and ordinary to pretend just cause of dislike, where the mind hath first taken a prejudice, either for no cause, or else for some cause that men are ashamed openly to owne. They who dislike our Office, and despise our *Persons* for our *Office* sake, are apt to take offence at ny thing we *are*, or *have*, or *do*. If we be *poor*, we are poor to a lower degree, than they like well of; our poverty renders our Message and our *Persons* both contemptible.

If we be *rich*, we become thereby an object of their *envy*. If we be of *mean birth*, that layes us lower in their esteem; if of *better parentage*, they think we do despise them, and therefore they do disrespect us. If we be *profoundly learned*, we are too high for them; if of *less Learning* and of lower Parts, we are not sufficient to instruct them. If we be *blameable in our conversation*, then our lives do more hurt by bad example, than our Preaching doth good by sound doctrine.

In some thing or other, all of us, in their opinion, are defective; and some of us in all. We fail either in our *Intellectuals*, *Prudentials*, or

Morals ; either we are not of *deep knowledge*, to instruct them sufficiently in the ways of God; or we are not of *prudent Carriage* , to oblige them by a winning behaviour ; or else , we are not *sober, righteous, holy* , to set them a good example to walk after.

To this we reply. The *poverty* and *mean extraction* of our persons doth not deserve your contempt of our Function ; nor do we desire your better esteem , because of our better *fortunes* or *descent*. These outward things are things indifferent, and stand neuter in this case ; they do not of themselves influence us either way, as to our Function, or your respects. *Jeroboam's sin, in making Priests of the lowest of the people*, was not this , that their low estate , did either make them unfit for the office, or unworthy of it ; but because they were not of the *Tribe* appointed for that office, and chiefly because he had this design in it, To over-rule such mean persons, to institute or embrace any Religion, what might best comport with his rebellion, and new erected usurpation.

We are Stewards of a *spiritual Treasure* ,
our

our poverty doth not hinder us, nor our riches help us, in the distribution of it.

At our Saviours low estate, the Jews took offence, to the prejudice of his *Doctrine* and *Works*, both which were indeed beyond exceptions; *Is not this the Carpenters son?--- and they were offended in him, Matth. 13. 59, 57.* Christ hath sanctified to us that rock of offence.

Nor doth our more *liberal estate*, where Providence bestows it, any way impede us. It's not the possession, much less the sober and pious use, of earthly things, that is contrary to the divine Worship and Service, to which Ministers are designed: *Affectus in crimine est.*

As for our *defects* and *infirmities* of what kind soever, we will not defend them, but humbly *acknowledge* them before God and man, and endeavour to *amend* them; but we would not have our supposed, no nor our real, blemishes, to cloud, or blot out, that *impress* of upon God us in our *Ordination*, nor draw your *disrespects* upon our *Function*.

Though we may be less valuable, for our
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personal defects and infirmities ; yet let not the *honour*, which God hath put upon our *Calling*, fare worse for our sakes : honour us for *Gods* sake , when you cannot for *our own* : the less we have to deserve it , the more apparently is it given to *God* , and the more acceptable will it be to him.

Our blessed Saviour hath determined the question , what is to be done , in case people fall under the conduct of unworthy Ministers : they must not *despise* them , nor *reject* them, but give them the honour of *audience* and *obedience* too, where they preach the truth. Those Teachers are pronounced bad , because they *say* and *do not* ; but are owned as having authority from God , *They sit in Moses seat* , *Mat. 23. 2, 3.* therefore obey their *commands*, but follow not their *practice*.

But these are not the true causes of your disrespect. That is not the true cause of any effect , which doth not bear proportion to it. Here the effect is *Universal* , the cause *not so* : the whole Clergy is under *contempt*, only some of them under *blame*.

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There are *two things*, which though they may less appear, yet are in truth the *greatest Causes* of what disrespect and unkindness we find in the World, our *Maintenance* is the one, our *Message* the other: the former represents us *chargeable* and *burdensom*; the latter *offensive* and *troublesom*; and both these conspire toge her, to deprive us of that honour God hath invested us with.

1. Our *Maintenance*. Though here the cause of Complaint, is much more on our side, than on theirs who make it, there being so considerable a part of the Churches Patrimony alienated from her Ministers, called rightly *impropriated*, in acknowledgment of the proper use, from which it is taken.

Our *Maintenance* becomes a Cloud upon us to Eclipse our *Honour*, through a double misapprehension. First, that it is paid by the people at *their own charge*. Secondly, that it is *too great* for the use to vvhich it is allotted. Let these mistakes be rectified, and you vvill cease to grudge us our maintenance, being so *little concerned* in the one, namely, the *charge* of
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of it, and so *much* in the other, the *benefit* you may reap from our labours.

Our *Tythes* indeed (the greatest part of our Maintenance) being the Tenth of your Increase, are mingled with your nine parts, and in your possession, and therefore must be *delivered* by you into ours, but are *not paid* by you out of your own Estate.

Under the *Law* the Tenth of their Increase was Gods portion, which he reserved to himself out of that which his bounty had given to the people, to be their homage paid unto God out of their Estates, as a testimony from them of their receiving all from God, and as a means to draw down his blessing upon theirs.

This *reserved portion*, God doth in effect graciously bestow upon the *people* again, by an after-grant; giving it to others, for *their* use and more important advantage; making it the Maintenance of the *Priests*, whose office it was to bring them to God. And thus it became more their own, than that greater largess given at the first. Their part is expended upon their

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Mal. 3. 10.
Solve decimas,
ut ditescas.

maintenance is of *divine Right*; and from the latter it may be concluded, *That by Tythes*: especially seeing the *Tenth* part was formerly the *Quantum* appointed by Gods express command under the Law, and the same is established also by the *municipal Laws of Christian Countries*.

But whether Tythes be due to the Ministry *Jure divino*, or not, we need not labour here to determine. This is sufficient to the matter under discourse, that they are so *Jure humano*; and this every man knows, that knows any thing of the Law of the Land. By the Laws of this Kingdom, Tythes stand as a *distinct Estate* from the nine parts from which they are severed, and are appointed the Patrimony of the Church, for the maintenance of her Ministers, (those excepted that are *impropriated*;) so that now no man pays any thing out of his own Estate, to the maintenance of the Ministry: *Tenants* have it considered to them in their *Rents*, and *Owners* in their *Purchases*. This the covetous *Zealot against Tythes* would soon, to his disappointment and grief, have understood,

stood, had he prevailed in his late eager design; when he should have seen his Landlord, by raising his Rent proportionably to his Tythes (newly gained, as he thought from his Minister to himself) take to himself that gain, which he had so long, so earnestly, and with such success pursued.

2. Our *Maintenance* is thought *too great* for the use it's allotted.

The former mistake rectified, removes this also out of the way: for let it be how great soever, it concerns not you, so long as it comes not out of your purse. For what our maintenance is, we are thankful to God and good men, who in love to Religion, have made such provision, for some to study it and promote it: O let not the eyes of this present generation be evil, because those of their pious Ancestors have been good.

But is our maintenance indeed too great? The *envious eye* looks at other mens Estates, especially that of the *Clergie*, through a *magnifying Glass*. If it be too great, it is upon one or both these accounts, That the Ministry may

be sufficiently supplied with fit accommodations at a less charge, or that the result of their work doth not countervail the charge, such as it is.

To the former : Some men, who are *prodigal* enough in their own expences, and think nothing too much for themselves, are very *frugal* and *sparing*, when they come to consider, what may be a competent maintenance for *us*.

To what purpose is this waste ? it might have been sold for much, and given to the poor, Job. 12. Thus *Judas*, to cloak his intended *Sacrilege*, pretends *Charity*. His hypocrisie is unmaskt ; *not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a Thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*

If our *Lord himself* was grudged that precious box of oyntment, devoted by a pious woman to his personal service ; well may *we his Servants* expect the like measure from the covetous World, to have that judged waste, which the bounty of pious persons hath devoted to our maintenance in his service.

But is our maintenance too great ? That of
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the Dignified Clergy excepted, the Revenues of the Parochial, if you look into most instances, are either *bare* and *scant competences*, or else falling short of that; and are too strait allowances, not only in respect of their former liberal education, and the Peoples present expectations of their *Charity* and *Hospitality*, but also in respect of the very *Necessities* of their families urgent upon them for supplies. The meanest *Artificers*, who are bred up to their several Trades at a little charge, have a *better income* from *their* Callings, than some of us have from *ours*, though educated to it at great expence.

To the latter: If the effect of our Function be judged unequal to the charge at which we are maintained, what a low esteem hath the World of those things which are most truly valuable? It argues mens minds greatly depraved, who undervalue such *precious things* to a little present charge, which cannot be purchased with money, nor truly valued at any price.

The favour of God is better than life it self;
the Salvation of Souls is of vast moment, *what*
will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and
lose

lose his own soul? A portion in the infinite Merits of Christ excels all earthly Treasures. An everlasting life in perfect peace and greatest glory, to begin, when this momentany life of sin and misery ends, is certainly, in the judgment of all considerate persons, to be preferred before the greatest pleasures that can arise from the practice of sin, and fulfilling of lust.

And these are the things that our Office is appointed to tender to you, and to possess you of. *Spiritual things* given in exchange for *Carnal*, 1 Cor. 9. 11.

We, out of modesty and self-denial, are unwilling at any time to make the matter of our maintenance the subject of our Sermons; we are loth to tell you, That *God* is the true *Proprietary in Tythes*, because he hath made *us* the *Usufructuaries*, and so through ignorance of the true state of them, you become neither chearful, nor just in the payment of them, as otherwise you might be.

It is our duty to instruct you in all *Truths*; and also by all due means, to preserve our own *reputation* with you; and so we may lie under

an obligation in each respect, to inform you in this matter ; especially, seeing those *false Teachers*, in the late times of falling away from the Church, that they might destroy our *Function*, did cry down our *Maintenance*, and had their desired effect upon many, making some their *Profelytes in that so profitable a Doctrine*, and *levening* others whom they could not quite pervert ; so that now in the practice of this novel opinion, many *make conscience* not to pay their Tythes, and more *make no conscience* to pay them.

Therefore, if any of us, lead by the sense of his own duty, and his desires to instruct you, should fall upon this discourse ; let me anticipate your hard censures, and beseech you, not to surmise, that such admonishes you of your duty for his own ends, and warns you against sacrilegious fraud, because himself is damnified by it.

.II. Our *Message*. This, though it make the least noise, yet upon due observation will be found the greatest cause of all other, of that neglect the Ambassadors of Christ meet with
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in the World. And this is the greatest wonder, That that which should reconcile all persons to us, and bear up our reputation under whatsoever our personal failings and defects be, should prove the chief thing to bring the people to a dislike of us, and disaffection to us: That that, for which our Calling is invested, and supported with honour, should it self be the underminer of our credit, and procure our reproach. Yet so it will be found to be, if we take a survey of the entertainment it hath in the World.

Our *Message* from God to men, is, That they be reconciled to God. If the Embassy we are imployed in were inverted, and we made *Ambassadors for sinners*, to pray God in their stead, that he would be reconciled to them; That God would receive them into favour, though they continued in enmity against him; That Christ would give them the Priviledges of his Kingdom, though they never received him to rule over them; That God would at last give them everlasting life in glory, though they walked all their life-time in their own sinful

ful pleasures, and ways of perdition.

If we might tell them of the *Priviledges* of the Gospel, and say nothing of the *Duties* thereof ; If we could tell them, that the Promises are absolute, and conceal from them the Condition expressed, that *without holiness none shall see God* ; that *the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*.

If we had such *pleasing things* to tell them, no message would come more welcome to them ; no Messengers be better accepted with them. How *beautiful upon the mountains* would our feet be ? how grateful should we be to the World, and have the kindest entertainment at the hands of sinners ? could we say, *Peace, Peace* to them, though they *walked on in the iniquity of their ways*.

But we are not *Factors* for the Devil ; we are *Ambassadors for Christ*. Our Message is from *Heaven*, not from the infernal Pit. As if God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christs stead, Be ye reconciled to God : Believe and repent : Take Christs yoke upon you, and be obedient unto him ; walk not af-

ter the flesh, but after the spirit : Part with every lust, cease from all sin ; *crucifie the whole body of sin* : let your repentance be sincere ; not in reversion, intended for the future ; nor partial, and by the halves ; let it be a present, universal permanent change of heart and life.

These are the things we have in charge , to deliver to you , as our Message from God to you. And these are worthy of God to require, and best for you to give ; thus will Gods Kingdom be again erected and established : thus will mans nature be refined , and exalted to primitive excellency : thus will men be trained up for Heaven ; fitted to do the holy service , and to enjoy the pure delights of that holy place.

Yet so unreasonable are lust and sin ; so do these blind the eyes , and inchant the hearts of men , that those terms , which are so equal in themselves , and so congruous to mans nature and future hopes , are judged hard and unreasonable ; and Christ refused , peace with God rejected, salvation wholly neglected, rather than these admitted.

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And thus the Message, through mistake and prejudice, being disliked and rejected, the Messengers also fall under the like hard Fate: and as those two, in the Gospel, possessed with Devils, said unto *Christ*, so those who are possessed with lusts, the Brats of the Devil, say to his *Ambassadors*, who come to cast them out; *What have we to do with you? are you come to torment us before the time?* Mat. 8.

To cry down the ways of sin, which corrupt nature cries up; and to promote righteousness, holiness, sobriety, and all the vertues which mens lusts have such an Antipathy against, must needs prove an ungrateful work. To press against the bent of mens strong inclinations; to commend to them what they most dislike, is not the way to procure him, that is so imployed, any good will or esteem.

Profession of Religion and form of Godliness, is not disliked; our Preaching is not displeasing, if we touch not upon mens beloved lusts; They like not our reproofs. *And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument,*

ment, for they bear thy words ; but they do them not, Ezek. 33. 31, 32, 30. Sound Doctrine and eloquent Language is not ungrateful to their ears : But *lust* must not be too openly and severely checkt ; nor *duty* too earnestly pressed *their hearts go after their lusts.* Therefore they despise us, talk against us, because they cannot forsake the ways we reprove, nor do the things we exhort them to.

Am I therefore your enemy, because I tell you the truth ? Gal. 4. 14. S. Paul had lately boasted of that kind and honourable entertainment he had with the *Galatians*, *Received as an Angel of God, even as Jesus Christ.* If it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them unto him. And presently he complains, he was like to lose their friendship, by his plain and faithful dealing with them.

To reprove sin, is commonly a fruitless and thankless office : He that doth it, shall not lose his labour only, and his reward, but come in danger to draw that displeasure on himself, which should be poured forth upon the sin he reproveth ;

reproves ; as if the *reproof*, and not the *fault*, were worthy of blame.

Cicero, in his *Tract de Amicitia*, takes notice of that perverse carriage of offenders, and gives his animadversion upon it : *Atq; illud absurdum est, quod ii qui monentur, eam molestiam, quam debent capere, non capiunt : eam capiunt, quâ debent carere. Peccasse enim se non anguntur, objurgari molestè ferunt.*

This is not our uncharitable surmise : mens practices will abundantly witness the truth of it, while they continue in their sins, without fear, and in neglect of duty, without any regard to our better advice and admonition.

And thus seeing our *Message* disregarded, our counsel rejected, and our whole *Embassy* made useless, and of no effect, through the sinful resolutions of men to continue in their sins, it is not a reasonable expectation, that our *Persons* should be preserved from contempt, and our *Office* held in honour.

But what remedy shall we prescribe to this Epidemical disease ?

Let no man despise thy youth, is *S. Pauls* advice

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vice to *Timothy*. We have not mens hearts and tongues in our keeping, to hold them from disdainful thoughts and words against our persons and office. But we will do what we can, that our *persons* be not contemptible, nor our *Ministerial* actions vile. We will do what we can to give you no cause to despise us: and that you may not despise us without cause.

The Text puts *Honour* upon *you*, and also gives *you* a *Duty* in charge. We prescribe this as a remedy against your despising us, That you truly *value your selves*, and carefully *do your duty*.

Put a *just value* upon your *selves*, and you will see cause to give *us* our due honour. Your *Souls* are immortal: the whole tenure of Scripture proves it. That you are endowed with discourse and reason, shews your Souls to be of a more sublime nature, than the souls of beasts. The erect site and frame of your body, leads you to a high opinion of your Soul; and by its posture to contemplate Heaven, intimates Heaven to be the place of the Souls future reception.

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Your *Bodies* indeed are subject to corruption. The Rabbins observe a Mystery in the word *one*, which with a very little change in one point, signifies the *Living* and the *Dead*: and note from thence, that man is but a point from death. Yet even your frail bodies, when calcined in the earth, and raised up again to life, by the power of God, shall then be incorruptible.

Your *persons* are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; the *Ministry of reconciliation* is put into our hands, that you may be reconciled to God, through the blood of Christ, and be saved.

Value your selves by what God hath done for you, both in Creation and Redemption, and you will see your need of our assistance, and our usefulness to you in your greatest concerns, and will value us and our Ministry accordingly.

A true estimate taken of your own worth, will also put you upon your duty: and your doing your duty, will further incourage us in ours: we shall with all joy and readines of mind,

mind, discharge our office towards you, when we see you, out of a sense of your souls true worth, earnestly seek reconciliation with God.

Our Duty measures out yours: when we *Preach*, you are to be attentive *Hearers*: when we *Pray*, you are to *joyn devoutly* with us: when we administer the *Sacrament* of the Lords Supper, you are to *partake* worthily of it.

Preaching is not our only Duty, therefore is not Hearing your only Duty. But yet the one is our duty, and the other yours. Those who seem to have the least kindness for *Preaching*, do yet allow of one kind of it as *necessary*, namely, to convert *Pagans*; to instruct those in the Faith of Christ, and to perswade them to embrace it, who have not heard of Christ: And another kind as *expedient*; To instruct *Christians*, as need requires, to comfort, exhort, reprove them.

For the former; though there may be much ignorance in some places among the vulgar, yet no where so great, as that we should look upon them as Pagans, and address our selves to them, as to those that know nothing of the Gospel.

Gospel. But such is the ignorance of many, who are in the bosom of the Church, such their forgetfulness of what they know in Religion, such their neglect and unwillingness to practise what they do not forget ; such their aptness to back-slide ; that Preaching is necessary , not only to them *without* the Church, but to those also *within* it, to instruct them further in Religion, to exhort them to a due practice of it, to cherish their obedience, and to hold them back from sin.

We preach , to the end , you may hear ; therefore what necessity there is for our Preaching, there is the same for your Hearing. Then that you may receive benefit by our Embassy, you must be diligent frequenters of Sermons. Some are of opinion, we may preach , and you may hear *too much*. Let me commend to you four Cautions , and then hear as much as you can.

1. Let not our *Preaching* and your *Hearing* juggle out *other Duty*, to which we are equally at least obliged. Do not desire that *Divine Service* be cut short, to gain more time for the *Sermon*,

let not the *Publick Prayers* of the Church become *tributary* to Sermons.

2. Do not account Preaching the *only*, or the main essential Duty of Religion.

3. *Be ye doers of the word, not bearers only.* Do not think your duty is done, when the Sermon is ended: but that your chief work is to begin, when you have received instructions for it. Do not recompense *defects in doing* your duty, by *supererogating in bearing it*: such is not equal commutation. The more you hear, the *more*, and not the *less*, are you obliged to practise. You hear to know, and you know to do.

Your great and common failing in this important point, hath lead some persons into misapprehensions about the *End* of Preaching, That we preach only to be *heard*; and that we expect no further issue of our Sermons, than that you sit *attentively* while they last, and when they are done, repair to your houses, satisfied that you have done your duty. These persons judge of our Sermons, not by what *we say*, for they hear us not, but by what *you do*, and that they see.

We

We preach to instruct, exhort, admonish, reprove you; see that you comport with the end of our Preaching: we commend to you *good works*: we press *them* upon you, that you would *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly*. Though we cannot urge good works as *meritorious*, and make that consideration our chief argument to commend them to your practice; yet we can, and do press them upon you, as *necessary*: The peremptory *Commands* of our Saviour, and his conditional *Promises* make them so.

4. Take heed *whom* you hear. Hear those who are the *Ambassadors of Christ*; who have their *Commission* and their *Message* both from God; whom the *Church* hath invested with *Authority* to preach. Hear Preachers *legally Ordained*, upon trial and proof first taken of their abilities. And among these Orthodox and lawful Ministers, I commend to you in the first place *your own Minister*, whom God and the established Law hath set over you to be your spiritual Guide. Hear *not* such, who neither had *Education*, nor have any real *Abilities* for the

Ministry : who intrude themselves into the Preachers office out of misapprehension : Of themselves they have *too high* conceit, or of Preaching *too low*. They falsely arrogate to themselves the *special assistance of the Spirit*, to enable them to do that which otherwise they are most unfit to undertake. Or else, they think Preaching so mean and easie a work, that any body, who is good for little else, may do it.

These mens real *abilities* are not those of the *Soul*, knowledge, wisdom, piety ; but of the *Body* ; they are able to speak *loud* and *long*, and by that means represent themselves zealous for Gods glory, and the Peoples salvation. Most of such, as they care little for the *Churches Authority* to admit them to that Office ; so do they as little regard the *Doctrine of the Church* in the execution of it.

Hear *such* as are *educated* for the service of the Ministry, and do, by diligent study, meditation, and prayer, *prepare* their Sermons, and do not *boldly* speak *quicquid in buccam venerit*, what comes next. *Demosthenes* would not offer

offer to speak his Orations before he had prepared them, and had taken *Notes* of what he would speak; He said, *It was a token, the man loved the people well, who would be careful before what he would say to them.*

I would have added a fifth Caution, Take heed *what* you hear; but I see *that* superseded, in greatest part, in *this*. Hear such a Preacher as will take heed what he *speaks*, and you will need the less, to take heed what you *hear*.

With these Cautions, hear what you can; that your *Understanding* may be *inlightned* with true *knowledge*, and your *Affections* *inlivened* to suitable *action*.

Ignorance is no help to devotion, unless to such as it self is, *blind Devotion*: nor can it be any help to obedience, unless you make Gods *secret* (not his *revealed*) will, the rule of it, *Act. 13. 27.*

And zeal without knowledge is dangerous; it *batb* had ill effects, and *may have* so again, *Rom. 10. 2. Job. 16. 2.*

Let *Knowledge* go before to guide *Zeal*, and *Zeal* follow after to actuate *Knowledge*. *Affection* is active and violent, ready to transport
mem

men into unsound opinions and unsafe practices, if *knowledge* do not over-rule and guide it. *Justinian* the good Emperour, out of his love to Christ, and zeal for his glory, embraced the false opinion of the *Aphthartodocitæ*, and chused rather to believe Christs body to be incorruptible, than, as ours are, corruptible.

Let not your greater zeal for *some truths*, bear down others, for which you have less affection, and of which less knowledge. *Cicero*, that he might defend *liberty* of mans will, and *contingency* of second causes, and keep out Fatal *Necessity*, denies the *Præscience* and *Providence* of God: which *S. Augustine* observing, says, *Ciceronem, ut faceret homines liberos, fecisse sacrilegos.*

Prayer is another Duty of our Office: your Duty it is to join with us therein, with due attention, reverence, and devotion. *Publick Prayers* are most prevalent with God for obtaining of mercies, when many of his people join their interest and strength together, as it were to besiege Heaven.

Forms of Prayer are not to be excepted against.

gainst. There never was any solid cogent argument brought against them, nor, I believe, ever will be. Nor are *our* Publick Prayers to be disliked. Those many aspersions heretofore cast upon our *Liturgie*, have in the issue proved rather *beauty spots*, to adorn and commend it, than *blemishes* to disguise and disgrace it.

A late reverend and learned Person, *Hooker*. taking notice of the great number and little force of the Exceptions taken against it, says thus of them; 'Which whosoever doth measure by *Number*, must needs be out of love 'with a thing that hath so many faults; whosoever by *Weight*, cannot chuse but esteem 'very highly of that, wherein the Wit of so 'scrupulous Adversaries hath not observed any 'defect, which themselves can seriously think to 'be of moment.

That Exception touching our *Conformity* with the *Church of Rome*, in our Common Prayer, both in the *Form* of it, and in much of the *Matter* of it, which of all other seems to be the greatest, as striking not at some one branch
of

of it, but at the very frame and body of the Book, will be found very impertinent and weak, if duly weighed.

We do not depart from that Church, upon any other cause, nor in any other thing than her Errors. Where those of the Church of *Rome* follow truth and reason, we are ready to go along with them. As we would follow none in their *Errors*, so neither would we reject the *Truth*, because such retain it, who together with truth hold Errors also.

What therefore there is in *their* Prayers agreeable to the holy Scriptures, that we willingly retain. We do not follow the Example of that Church, without reference had to that Rule, which will preserve us from Error. *Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ*, is all that *S. Paul* desires of the *Corinthians*, and we grant no more to the *Church of Rome* in this matter.

To administer the *Sacraments*, is another great Duty of our Office. It's your duty to bring your Infant-children solemnly to the one, and to come your selves devoutly to the other.

Let

Let not the *Cross in Baptism* be a stumbling-block in your way to it. If any scruple at that, let him seriously consult the *Thirtieth Canon of our Church*, and he shall receive ample and sufficient satisfaction.

Nor let *Kneeling at the Lords Supper* hold you back from it. It is a gesture of piety and humility. And it's fit the *Body* should give testimony of the *Soul* unfeignedly humbled, when such high and undeserved favours are bestowed upon man by God. We cannot promise you to work a *Miracle*, and by the words of Consecration repeated, change the *Bread* into the very *Body* of Christ, so that what was Bread before, shall thereby cease to be Bread, and become Christs Body; and by this means put all persons promiscuously into a capacity to eat the Lords Body. But this we can do; we can so change the outward Elements of Bread and Wine, though not in *Nature*, yet in *Use*, that according to Christs Institution, they shall really represent, exhibit, and seal to you the Body and Blood of Christ,

to the great benefit of your Souls, provided you come duly prepared, and devoutly disposed.

Lastly, It is our Duty, required of us both by *Law*, and his Majesties late *Indulgence*, to be *Conformable*. Give me leave to enlarge the word, and to commend the *Duty* to you.

Be you *Conformable*, throughly and exactly, to your *Mother the Church*, in her Doctrine, Discipline, Government, Rites, and Ceremonies; to your heavenly *Father* also, God Almighty, in Faith and Manners.

I mention your Conformity in this Order; not to give the preheminance to the *first*, but to signifie thus much to you, that *Conformity to the Church* is a proper means much conducing to *Conformity to God*; that whosoever shall judiciously and conscientiously conform to the *Church*, will become more disposed to conform to the holy *Laws of God*.

This upon a threefold account.

I. *Conformity* is a signal mean to secure to us and our Posterity, the *Reformed Religion*
as

as now established, in the open, publick Profession of it. *Non-conformity* is an evidence of mens dislike, dissatisfaction, and offence taken at the publick Exercise of Religion: and what they dislike, complain of, quarrel at, they will no longer hold, than opportunity may serve to shake off. And our sad experience shews us the mischiefs that arise from such inconstancy in Religion. When men have once departed from that sure ground on which the Reformed Religion sets them, they find no where to rest, but scruple, and fluctuate, and change from one perswasion to another, till at last, they do in effect, cast off all *Religion*, and with it *Humanity* too, and relapse into as perfect *Paganism*, as that from which our Nation was first converted, saving that the bare names of Jesus Christ and the Gospel remain amongst them.

To be always *innovating* in Religion, and calling out for further *Reformation*, shuts the door against all such as might have inclination to come in to us; and opens the door to all

that would go out from us.' For till they see us settled and fixed, they cannot see what Faith they shall *live* in, nor foresee what Faith they shall *dye* in. And by this means, the state of Religion may be weakened, by decrease of the number of those, who publicly profess it.

II. *Conformity* doth much conduce to the real and profitable practice of Religion.

1. It prevents that loss of time, which minds unsatisfied about these things suffer. Dissenters spend that time in furthering their dislikes, and maintaining their quarrels at such things, as Conformists are satisfied in, which might have been spent more profitably, in studying those practical things, which would influence their lives to all good conversation.

2. It removes that disturbance of mind, wherewith such men disquiet themselves, that they cannot settle to peaceable life and virtuous practice.

III. *Conformity* disposes men to a perfect, peaceable submission to the Ministry, and to improve themselves under it, in the several duties

ties thereof. It keeps men from affecting Novelties, and from loathing the wholesom food of the Word.

Τὸ φιλόκαινον καὶ ἀψήκορον, An appetite desiring novelties, and then soon nauseating at them (which *Lucian* observed to be inbred in the nature of man; and which others since have noted to be the great causes of those many Heresies introduced into the Church) is best subdued and suppressed by a conscientious Conformity.

His Majesties Indulgence, though it expresses the Church of *England* to be preserved and remain entire, in its Doctrine, Discipline, and Government; Though the liberty indulged be only to truly tender Consciences, and that in order rather to reclaim them, than to retain or increase the number of them; yet hath had this sinister construction put upon it by the practice of some, as if every man now were set at liberty to profess what Religion, and to joyn himself to what Congregation himself liked best. For some have forsaken the Church
out

out of some petty pique taken against their Minister : some having committed a crime punishable by our Ecclesiastical Laws, have fled to a separate Congregation, as to a City of Refuge, to save themselves from the lash of the Law.

The consideration of this hath moved me to say much of what I have now spoken upon this matter. And hereupon I beseech you, that you will in all good conscience frequent Divine Service, Sermons, and Sacraments, and endeavour to improve yourselves under those good means, in knowledge, piety, and all Christian practice, That if the practice or perswasion of any person should be a temptation upon you, to forsake the Church you have been born and bred up in, to joyn your selves to some separate Congregation; your sound knowledge in Religion, your sincere esteem of it, and hearty love to it, and your willing submission to it as it's now established by Law, may be your preservative and security against all seducements whatsoever.

There

There was *another Conformity* mentioned, namely, *to God: That ye be holy in all manner of conversation*, giving up your selves wholly to be governed by the holy Laws of God. Let it be your chief care to be conformable in *this sense*: let this Conformity be the *end* of the former, for it is the *intent* of it. The Discipline, Rites, and Ceremonies of the Church are all intended for the advancement of Religion in the hearts and lives of men.

Let Church-Conformity lead you to Conformity to God, and let your Conformity to God credit and crown your Conformity to the Church.

That your selves first observing, piety and devotion, and all Christian practice to grow in you, by means of Conformity to the Church, you may still like the better of it, and be more confirmed in it.

And that others, as yet prejudiced against it, observing your good conversation, virtuous and gracious life, may also be perswaded to make tryal of that course, in which you
have

have been happily trained up in knowledge and piety ; and finding the like good effect upon themselves from it , may become judiciously and conscientiously conformable, and be happy Examples to draw other dissenting persons into Church-fellowship with us, to the glory of God , the honour of Religion, the peace of the Church, their own Salvation, and the increase of brotherly Love amongst us.

F I N I S.



